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UNCLAS HARARE 001049

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX AND ROBERTSON, AF/S FOR KRAFT AND  
SCHLACHTER, AF/RA FOR DIPALMA, INR/R/MR, NSC JENDAYI  
FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ZI PREL PHUM  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT PRIVATE PRESS UNDER SIEGE; HARARE

¶1. Under headline "State wants to save its media by killing the private Press," the independent daily "The Daily News" dedicated its May 1 editorial to criticizing Information Minister Jonathan Moyo. Moyo recently warned parastatal institutions that they should not place advertisements in the independent press. Excerpts:

¶2. "The threat by a government minister to parastatals to stop advertising in 'The Daily News' is an act of desperation, designed to force these companies to direct all their business to the loss-making government-controlled media houses, in order to save them from bankruptcy. The government is aware that their own media operations cannot compete fairly for business on the market, hence the directive. But this is a worn-out strategy often resorted to by those intolerant to critical or alternative views.

"...The statement by the minister that 'The Daily News' is bent on the destruction of this country is utter balderdash. It can only be made by someone who assumes they have a monopoly on patriotism. What it, however, indicates is the government's frustration with its efforts to silence, once and for all, alternative and critical voices. . ."

SULLIVAN